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765 Thereupon follows a second, who just like the first has a calabash in hand, but this time filled with spirituous liquor, and from time to time sprinkles a few drops of it on the ground, in token of the fact that on this occasion, too, by means of drink, they think of the deceased with joy.

Then they again return to the dwelling, where all are gathered, and celebrate an enjoyable night with song and dancing until daybreak.

Chapter XII

Character, Virtues and Vices

157 [577] The Bush Negro, as I have already said above, has a great deal of respect for old age and for distinguished persons; with respect to their closest relations they are honest, which they can- [461] not pride themselves on otherwise. In their ordinary affairs they [609] are not lazy, but work tirelessly whenever it is necessary. With respect to strangers they are generous and obliging, all the more [152] when they can assume that they may claim reward. Jealousy, [784] envy, and malice are their greatest vices. Concerning many matters they have an antipathy that they call trefoe (treef). Thus, [781] for instance, one will eat something, the other not. Also they are very superstitious in small matters, to which they cling all the way down to distant generations; they call that obia (literally translated, bewitchment, magic).

262 [123] An Auca girl who through attachment to my wife and me has already lived with us in the town for fully five years, because [589] since the death of her husband, who was one of my most trusted workers, she did not want to attach herself to another, and who performed all kinds of housework for us, carries her trefoe of not eating any unscaled fish so far that she will not even cook her food on a fire where there is a pot in which an unscaled fish was previously prepared. I know another one who uses no milk and also does not eat meat of any kind (with the exception of bacon), unless it be game, and then it must be prepared by her, on the grounds that everything is prepared with butter and that butter comes from

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304 so much time on the desire for this kind of ostentation. When the incisions become faint through time and the growing of the skin, they are raised again by renewed carving.

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Chapter XX

The Attitude toward Europeans and the Latter's Treatment of Them

• 461 The Bush Negroes begin to think of work when they have
313 little strong drink, powder, and lead left on hand; they leave their
439 camp and go to the work places where they are accustomed to felling trees and working these into squared timber, which they then tie together into rafts and float down the rivers in order to sell it on the plantations and at Paramaribo.

439 Some among them, especially the Saramaccaners, bring korjalen, pinda nuts (1), and groundnuts and Tonka beans (2) to

1. Arachis hypogoea L.

2. The fruit of the Dipteryx.

439 the part of the colony inhabited by Europeans; they usually exchange
648 all this for strong drink. It is to be lamented that their trade with the Whites is frequently linked with unpleasantnesses. Generally the latter treat them with contempt. This takes place all too frequently on the plantations in particular, whereby naturally fear and dissatisfaction arise among the Bush Negroes against the Whites; it is therefore not surprising that, after having been repeatedly cheated out of their fair rights, driven by suspicion and a desire for revenge, they in turn frequently try to deceive the Europeans.

In order to make clear their attitude toward the Europeans, I shall cite some proceedings which became known to me in earlier years and which even now have not completely ceased in the colony,

B R 146 /513/ The scarcity of lipide foods, and, among the Boni, the low consumption of fruit might cause one to fear vitamin deficiencies. In fact, there are no signs of it.

B R 575 Body hygiene is excellent; Blacks and Indians bathe several times a day and are very fastidious about their persons.

B R 433 In summary, there is no appreciable difference in the customary activities, agriculture, hunting, and fishing, of the two populations. There is one in economic activity. Among the Boni, B R 461 who have a greater need for imported objects, the adult men work [465] for wages four to five months per year on the average. These jobs are very laborious and performed under bad dietary conditions, whereas the Indians rest when they are not occupied with their customary tasks, sometimes spending entire days stretched out in the hammock.

B R 177 The two populations have been in close contact for a long time. The Indian villages farthest downstream have immediate B R 177 contact with the first crop plantings of the Boni. Without having 648 any tendency to merge (their characters and their customs are too different), Boni and Oayana have maintained regular relations since the end of the eighteenth century, doing a little trade in imported articles exchanged for hammocks and dogs trained for hunting. They often visit each other, and nothing stops the spread of illness from the one group to the other.

B R 105 In fact, the way of life of the two groups is the same, the 182 environmental conditions have the same influence, and the differ- 164 ences which are observed in the pathology can only be attributed to a different sensitivity with regard to the principal illnesses.

B 164 [114] Pathology of the Boni. We shall briefly summarize here the observations of Dr. A. Sausse in his work Populations primitives du Maroni.

The pathology of the Boni is characterized by:

-- a resistance to malaria, which means that if the children have bad attacks an immunity will develop with age; the size of the spleen diminishes regularly from child to adult. The adults have only episodical attacks which are not serious; in particular

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591 99 692 In fact, the society of the Refugee Blacks has not elaborated true political institutions; it is essentially a grouping for collective defense against suprahuman perils. The council, like the grand man, has power and authority only insofar as it remains closely bound to this function.

511 [565] [584] Absence of subordination. Among the Refugee Blacks no privileged class exists, /16/ and they all face life on a footing of rigorous equality; all receive the same education, must cultivate the soil, build their boats and houses, and live by paid work. The differences in standard of living observed from one to another stem basically from intelligence and work; and that, in spite of the belief in the possibility of getting rich by sorcery, is clearly understood by all.

565 [465] 571 461 [357] [462] [643] Although the Boni willingly engage in paid work for one another in transportation by boat, there exists no tendency toward the formation of a class of rich people and one of wage-earners. No servants exist among them, and one observes in their mutual relations no exploitation of the weak. Neither does one observe that a rich man tries to have done by another, for pay, the customary jobs he must carry out for the benefit of his wife (clearings, building of boats). This would be looked on with great disfavor. The grand man himself, if his grandson is not there to help him, goes himself to draw water from the river and he does it ostensibly, even though he has a constant concern for his prestige.

829 The misfortunes undergone by their ancestors are certainly at the base of this conception; for they have inspired in the Refugee Blacks a particular sense of human dignity which is not found to the same degree in Africa.

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C48 difficulty in learning the techniques of his group, for the years
871 when the mind is most pliant have been lost in this regard; as
156 for the knowledge acquired at school, it is so foreign to the life of the Refugee Blacks that at the end of a few years none of it remains except vague smatterings.

861 In general, the process of education employed among the Refugee Blacks is imitation of the adult. A child is rarely given a lesson as such. He sees something done, he tries on his own
868 initiative, and little by little he learns. For example, /133/ he sees his guardian make a boat; he is simply asked to go and get dry palm branches and to take away the chips; he hears the adults discuss the job as it goes on. At about the age of 12 or 13 he tries to make a first boat for himself with the help of an older comrade. He progressively acquires knowledge of this technique.

561 Boys begin to take part in farm work from the age of six
462 or seven, principally weeding and planting. At about ten or eleven they begin to handle the machete and help to cut through the bush; at about 12 they begin to handle the axe and learn to fell trees. At 14 or 15 they begin to make small boats. An adolescent of 16 or 17 is in general capable of cutting a clearing for his mother or sister.

429 Most often the guardian takes his role very seriously, giving
86 his main attention to teaching the child all that is necessary. If it is a woman, she asks her brothers to teach the techniques of boating and building.

866 The principle is to develop very early a sense of responsi-
461 bility in the child by making it progressively necessary for him
434 to earn his living. The guardian does not furnish pocket money,
[291] and with the exception of a hammock every other year, no manufactured objects (children under 11-12 years not being clothed, he has almost no expenses for clothing). But he gives the child progressively chances to earn money by his work. From ten years on, the child begins to render some services: for example for the construction of a boat, he helps transport the dry palm branches intended for the burning. If the boat is being

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made for sale, the guardian gives him a small sum out of the money gained. At 14 an adolescent begins to satisfy nearly all his own needs.

For example, from June to December, 1956, Tasa (14 years), son of Fintiman (Boniville) had earned about 13,000 francs:

June	helped his father build a large boat for the administration (45 days)	6,000
October	went to Saint-Laurent as auxiliary bossman .	3,000
December	helped convoy a boat of the border-fixing mission sent back empty to Maripasoula . .	4,000
		13,000

His father, entrusted with his education, let him use this money in his own way; he pointed out to us with pride that for the first time in 1956 his son had been able to satisfy all his own needs, but that it was important to keep him under a firm hand until he was capable of doing a man's work alone: for that, five or six years of apprenticeship would not be too much.

In fact, many times we had the chance to verify it, it is in this prolonged apprenticeship that are developed the seriousness of mind and the technical skill so remarkable among the Refugee Blacks. At 20 years, most of them still do not know how to do anything worthwhile, and it is scarcely before 25 or 27 that they become capable of /134/ painstaking work; in this respect the present tendency of the young boys toward precocious emancipation (the marriage age of men is going down to 20 and even 18 years) runs the risk of having very unfortunate consequences for the future of the Refugee Blacks.

The person charged with the education of a girl exercises the powers of a mother toward her. It is she who authorizes her to marry, and by giving her the pagi, married women's garment, gives her symbolically her freedom as a woman. It is to her that the first husband pays the price of the virginity of the girl.

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593 342 461 [198] Nothing marks better the small place the conjugal bond has in a man's life; imagine the torture which this forced living and crowding together represent for each of these women! The Boni of today, much richer than their ancestors and better equipped with tools, are singularly lazier in building houses; no longer is anyone seen to sculpture and decorate the façades lovingly; when a man, after many recriminations, decides to build a house for his wife, he is content most of the time now with a simple shelter with plaited walls, which does not require 30 days work.

595 As we have said, each man may take as many wives as he wishes, on condition that he can supply their needs; but in practice the maintenance of a household is so heavy a load that most men have only one or two wives; only one to our knowledge has three. In fact, it is contrary to custom to free oneself by paying for work which one must do for one's wife. We have never heard it said that a rich man (many of them have hundreds of thousands of francs in savings) paid money in place of a piece of work, or paid someone to do it for him. The furnishing of imported objects is particularly burdensome, especially cloth, kitchen utensils (Boni women are infatuated with aluminum objects), and occasionally jewels. The Boni conceded in 1958 that the maintenance of a wife amounted to 30 to 40 thousand francs a year at least. If one considers that a hard-working man earned about 120,000 francs a year, that he spent 30 to 40 thousand francs a year for himself, that he often had /151/ in addition to provide for the needs of his aged parents and share the expenses of the festivals of the lineage, one sees that he could not have more than two wives at the same time. As for less hard-working men, who have no more than 60 to 80 thousand francs a year in ready money, they have a great deal of trouble in facing the maintenance of a single household, and many divorces have no other cause.

593 [461] [556] [454] [439] [511] [434] [511] [695] [434] [511] [586]

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593 [591] [163] Among the Refugee Blacks some very devoted couples are seen, who spend their whole lives together and who, in their old age, have completely united their destinies, living in the same house, either in the woman's village or the man's: for example, in the village of Lapé Tabiki, Butu and his wife Asamani, in 1952 aged about 70 years, together for 45 years and having had eight children. [581] But such cases are exceptional. Besides, they are not admired and held up as an example as one might believe; this man and this woman suited each other, they remained together; if some day they no longer get along, they will divorce. that is all.

595 Polygamy. Polygamy in the African sense of the term, that is, the simultaneous maintenance of several regular households, is exceptional among the Refugee Blacks because of their mode of living:

[433] [511] --The wife is practically entirely dependent on her husband; an economy based mainly on wage earning and involving a relatively high standard of living makes it impossible for most men to maintain more than one household;

• [461] --Even if a man had sizable financial means at his disposal, he could scarcely maintain more than two households; for it is not acceptable, at least nowadays, for him to have done by others the customary chores: clearings, boats, house.

169 595 On January 1, 1958 out of 134 men over 20 years old in the villages on the French bank, whose lives were well known to us, there were:

Men maintaining three households	1	1%
" " two households	18	13%
" " one household	104	77%
[589] Bachelors, widowers, or recent divorcés	11	8%
	134	100% /sic/

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767 764 [466] --The kisimã command the village during the whole time the coffin is being made and can requisition anyone to help them;

--The ɔlɔmã are masters of the river while their work lasts. In particular they can requisition travelers passing through to help them, and even confiscate their provisions. This is piisi, a joke. But as Mr. W. F. Van Lier also has us observe, this custom has a deep meaning; it reminds everyone that participation in the burial of a dead person is a fundamental religious duty.

767 467 The organization of these customary societies is, at least among the Boni, very rudimentary.

In each village there is a head of the ɔlɔmã who is acquainted with the topography of the cemetery and the rites to be carried out (hedemã fu ɔlo).

In Boniville, in 1958, this was Bukuman (Papaïston);

In Loka, Tabikiť, not replaced at the beginning of 1958;

In Asisi, Antonu (Awara Bakka).

If he is absent, someone is sent to get the head of the ɔlɔmã of another village.

Likewise, in each village there is a head of the kisimã:

In Boniville, this was Fintiman (Dju);

In Asisi, it was Boofo (Awara Bakka);

In Kormotibo, it was Aténi. /160/

764 476 The people willingly lend one another assistance from one village to the other, with no need even to ask for help, and even if it is a question of burying a foreigner in the country, a Saramaka or a Djuka for example, who dies in Boni country.

767 461 [152] For the making of the coffin it is rare not to find about 15 kisimã spontaneously met together when four or five would be enough. They like this labor very much, which proceeds in an atmosphere of joyous over-excitement in the center of admiring spectators.

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765 [769] [778] [613] After three months, an offering is made at the fraga tiki of the dead person's lineage, setting forth how much her spouse has respected her memory and asking permission to lighten the manifestations of his sorrow. The mourning is then lightened, but the man in mourning continues to wear a bandeau around his head or at the very least an old beret.

765 461 [613] During the first months the man in mourning has no other responsibility than to hunt and fish at the order of the dead woman's lineage. He does his own cooking with the food given to him; he cuts a clearing for his mother-in-law or another woman of the deceased's relatives, who will farm it with him.

[431] Next, he receives the order to go and earn the money necessary for the sizable contribution he must bring to the festival of the lifting of mourning. During the entire duration of the mourning he must report on his work and moves.

765 [606] When the end of mourning approaches, he must do a job for the benefit of his mother-in-law, generally redoing the roof of her house or building a boat for her.

These arrangements do not involve any material sanction whatever. [626] Like the rest of the social life of the Refugee Blacks, they rest entirely upon fear of a suprahuman sanction.

[589] After the lifting of mourning, the person in mourning may remarry without further delay.

765 768 [562] State of widows and co-wives of a widower. The state of a woman in mourning is practically identical to that of a widower. She lives for the duration of mourning in her deceased husband's house under the surveillance of his near relatives on the maternal side. [613] [439] The dead man's lineage lends her all the objects she needs and furnishes the imported commodities (salt, kerosene, soap) that she uses. On the other hand, she may freely use the produce of the clearing that her husband had cut for her, since it is taken for granted that these products are the exclusive property of the wife.

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461 829 431 On the material plane the same conception explains the high importance attached to fair payment for work done, the holy fury which takes possession of Refugee Blacks who consider themselves wronged; it also explains why they can interpret a free gift only as a mark of weakness except in exceptional cases (present given by a high official on the occasion of a visit). A gift which does not have the character of an exchange has no spiritual value for them; it brings only scorn and near hostility, for they feel that the object has not been legitimately acquired and that they are not in tune with their moral law.

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Local Divinities

776 823 The Refugee Blacks assume the existence of local divinities exercising a de facto power on such-and-such a portion of the country. Since their very special mode of life leads them to circulate almost exclusively along rivers, with them this idea has been transposed into a double notion: the divinities of the rivers and the gods of the soil. In their minds those are two entirely separate conceptions: the power of the god of the soil stops at the edge of the water and conversely.

De facto worship is rendered the divinities of the river according to the rites set by the first users of the river. In practice, worship is rendered only to the divinities of dangerous rivers where accidents are frequent. People do not bother with the others.

These gods are designated indiscriminately by the words gadu and sani (thing, being), indicating that their nature is not known.

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695 461 157 The Refugee Blacks have a sense of contract to a high degree, and they bring /291/ to the execution of work to which they have committed themselves qualities of seriousness, initiative, and a sense of duty not found to the same degree in Black Africa.

157 671 571 Refusal of any lasting commitment. If the Refugee Blacks honor their contracts, they do not like to commit themselves for a long period.

This attitude results from their desire for independence, but also from the moral and religious law which governs their society.

This law forbids infringing on the liberty of persons, humiliating anyone, and doing anything which might be able to plunge him into anger or affliction. Its effect is to prevent any exploitation of the weak, any creation of a servant or proletarian caste. It even leads to the absence of any permanent subordination of one man to another.

[466] The desire for independence of the Refugee Blacks makes them unwilling to bind themselves definitively to a job, however profitable. When a man judges that he has put aside sufficient savings, he leaves the job which furnished him with these resources.

[464] This tendency makes the search for paid work much more difficult and hazardous; it happens that a man may stay for years without finding gainful work, living in straitened circumstances. But that is the price of independence, and it is accepted without hesitation.

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In that can doubtless be seen the most likely explanation of the absence, in the tribes of Refugee Blacks, of any internal trade. There are not even markets in the villages. In practice only Creole and Asian traders are patronized.

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The repugnance which the Refugee Blacks have for trading with one another contributes toward preventing the development of specialized professions among them. Specialization does actually exist: one man is particularly good at building boats, another is a competent carpenter, still another devotes himself mainly to fishing; but the Refugee Blacks exercise these specialties with respect to other peoples and not with respect to one another. Nobody fails to build his own boat, his house, to cut his clearings himself. If it were otherwise, classes and castes would rapidly be created, and that is precisely what the moral law of the Refugee Blacks condemns. A special effect of this conception is to preserve family custom from deteriorating, by preventing the rich from becoming great polygamists maintaining idle mistresses. We have never heard it said that a richer man paid someone to perform for him the customary work he owes to his wives; clearings, house, boat. Whatever his wealth may be, he continues to do these jobs by the sweat of his brow, and that contributes toward maintaining in its meaning and value the tacit contract concluded between husband and wife.

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Thus the geographic conditions, associated with influences of a social and psychological order, impose on the Refugee Blacks a unique economy, based on a symbiosis with the coast populations in the form of piece-work or temporary wage-earning.

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888 829 This is a point of view which has great importance in the eyes of the Boni, for whom finishing one's days at the hospice or being reduced to asking for the help of outsiders constitutes the worst downfall.

829 They fear, moreover, as we have shown, Creole magic which they liken to a form of wisi.

On the other hand, they are impressed by the attainments of the Creoles, the real spirit of initiative and the strong personality of some of them; moreover, the Boni who have been to Cayenne have noticed the solicitude of the administration with respect to the population of the communes. For all these reasons there exists among the Boni a certain body of opinion in favor of creolization. But the very unique type of life of the Boni and their desire to keep their special customs attach them to their ancestral form of life; about 1890 the explorer Coudreau, observing the same facts, was predicting imminent creolization of the Boni. In fact, this did not happen, and it is unlikely to.

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648 464 Traditional relations with Europeans. The Refugee Blacks constitute an important element in the economic life of the Guianas; on behalf of the administration and European enterprises they perform many jobs (boating, wood-floating, tree-felling). They are not well adapted to other kinds of work, but in these activities which fit with their traditional mode of life they are equal if not superior to any labor. Very highly paid, they work with speed, effectiveness, and intelligence, exhibiting an initiative and sense of duty not commonly found in Africans(1).

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1. It is to be noted that if they stop leading their traditional kind of life, for example if they settle permanently near European establishments, they rapidly lose these qualities.